1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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contrast to the quiet solemnity which is characteristic of Moslems generally in the presence of death, is a most impressive sight. If the deceased has been a person of consequence, military standards are borne in the procession, and, in some places, Kermanshah for instance, the body is accompanied to the grave with music and singing. When the funeral leaves the house, men and women rush wildly out, uttering cries and shrieks, and tearing their hair and clothes. Some raise their hands to heaven, others bow themselves to the earth, and cast dust upon their heads, expressing both in sound and gesture the very abandonment of grief.

The funeral rites of the Yezidis are both peculiar and interesting. When a member of this sect is believed to be at the point of death, a *kawwal* is called in, who pours into the mouth of the moribund a quantity of water. If he should expire before this ceremony has been performed, it is deferred until his body is carried to the grave. The body is laid out with the arms crossed over the breast, and not, as with the Moslems, extended by the sides. In the coffin are placed a piece of bread, some coins, and a stick, for the use of the deceased when the "questioners" appear, for, like the Moslems, the Yezidis believe in post-mortem catechists. Should Munkir, when he arrives, attended by his scribe Nekir, to interrogate him concerning his faith and the character of his life, pronounce him unworthy to cross the threshold of Paradise, the dead man tries to bribe him to alter his decision, first with the bread, then with the silver. If these are unavailing, he resorts

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

539 The Kürds also relate the following allegorical story with reference to the same subject:

The Prophet and the Angel.[1]

When the Prophet—blessings upon him!—ascended [771] to Paradise, the archangel Gabriel accompanied him in order to show him all the wonders of the heavens. The Prophet—blessings upon him!—observed an angel of majestic stature, who stood in an expectant attitude, bearing on his shoulders an enormous drum, and holding in his hand a long drumstick. The Prophet—blessings upon him!—asked who he was, and what was his occupation. The angel replied, "O messenger of Allah, my duty is, when a Mollah confers a benefit or bestows an alms, even were it but some broken food to a beggar, to beat the drum, and thus announce to all the angels of the heavens the benefit or the almsdeed of the theologian."

Upon this, the Prophet—blessings upon him!—asked the angel, "How many times hast thou beaten the drum since thou hast held this office?"

"I am still waiting," replied the angel; "and up to this hour I have not once beaten it."

Will it be always thus? Allah knows. The clergy of all religions perform for the most part but few acts of benevolence or charity, for they require of the people almsdeeds and benefits, and themselves give nothing to the poor.

771 795 The vague mysticism which is so closely interwoven with the doctrines of the Shia sect, to which the

[1] Jaba, *Recueil*, &c., p. 15.

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

Persians belong, appears to have a greater charm for the Kûrdish mountaineers than the Semitic notion of an absolute and personal Allah, which is the dominant idea of the tenets held by the *Sûnni*, or "Orthodox" Osmanlis. The Dervish Orders, who constitute the mystics of Islam, are, consequently, extremely popular with the Kûrds, and the veneration of the women for the Sheikhs, or *pîrs*, as they are called, whether living or dead, exceeds, if possible, that entertained for them by the Turkish women. For, indifferent as the Kûrds may be to the dogmas of Islam, they, like all highlanders, are exceedingly superstitious, and firmly believe in all the occult and spiritual powers laid claim to by the Dervish Sheikhs.

The saint whom the Kûrds hold in the highest reverence is the deceased Sheikh, Khaled of Sulimaniah, whom they consider equal to Abdul Kadr of Ghilân,[1] if not to the Prophet Mohammed himself, and deem it profanation to speak of by any other title than that of *Hazreti Mevlâna*—"Our Lord the Prophet." This Kûrdish *pîr*, whose sayings his countrymen dignify by the name of *hâdîs*,[2] belonged to the Nakshibendî Dervishes, a "contemplative" Order famed for the deep mystic piety of its members, and which has produced many saints eminent in the Moslem world. To the tombs of dead, or the *tekkehs*[3] of living, Dervishes, the Kûrdish

[1] A Persian dervish who lived in the twelfth century, and founded the Order of the Kadiris. Wonderful stories are told of the supernatural powers possessed by this Sheikh, some of which may be found in *The Dervishes*, by J. P. Brown.

[2] The name given by Moslems to the sayings or "table talk" of Mohammed.

[3] The monasteries and temples in which the Dervishes reside and hold their services.

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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756 women resort for the cure of every ailment, physical or moral.

756 Is a child ailing, it is carried by its anxious mother
755 to the most eminent Sheikh within reach, who cures it by imposition, not of hands, but of feet, by breathing on it with his holy breath, or by hanging some sacred
[777] charm around its little neck. The first-named remedy may sound startling, but is actually applied, as I can vouch from personal observation.[1] The baby is laid on its back, and the Sheikh, laying his hands on the shoulders of two of his disciples who stand on either side, places his feet and rests his entire weight for a few seconds on the child's body. The Dervishes also
787 expound dreams, read the future, and furnish every other species of occult information of which their clients may stand in need.

776 Some Christian saints belonging to the Armenian calendar are also highly revered by the Kûrdish tribesmen. Of these perhaps Surp Serkís, or St. Sergius, is the one whose aid is most frequently sought. Kûrdish warriors, when about to enter on a campaign, resort
[731 to his tomb, and seek to enlist his favour and pro-
778] tection by there sacrificing a ram and lighting wax tapers.

776 The strange and widespread Oriental myth of Khidhr-Elias, in his double character of sea and land deity, is also current among the Kûrds, with whom he is Khidhr on land and Elias on the sea, and by whom he is invoked as a kind of guardian angel.

[1] I witnessed this strange practice at Bahsinan, after a service in the cabinet of the Merkeet, or "dancing" Dervishes, as they are commonly called by Europeans.

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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Besides the *djins* and other magical beings, in whose existence the Kūrds, in common with their neighbours of other races, implicitly believe, another class of uncanny visitants, called *sheyts*, excites the awe and dread of these mountain people. These are the apparitions—I will not say ghosts, for, like all Oriental *revenants*, they rise in the body—of martyrs, *i.e.*, Moslems who have died fighting for Islam, and at whose tombs, as at those of Dervish Sheikhs, miracles are believed to be wrought. When they rise from their graves and appear to mortals, which they are said occasionally to do in crowds, it is looked upon as a sign of some important coming event. The Kūrds appear, too, to credit them with habits similar to their own, and look upon them as a kind of fluctuating population, as nomadic as themselves.

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The Yezidis, or "Devil-worshippers," whom I have already mentioned as observing marriage and funeral rites differing from those of the Moslem Kūrds, form eight or nine separate tribes, some nomad, some sedentary. The execration in which they are held by Moslems has led to the identification of the supposed founder of the sect with Yezd, the slayer of Hassan and Hussein, the grandsons of the Prophet and martyrs *par excellence* of Islam. This name they, however, no doubt bore long anterior to the seventh century, *Yezd* being one of the titles applied by the ancient Persians to the Supreme Being. The name of Sheikh Adi, a mythical saint, to whom their chief temple is nominally dedicated, is derived, by Mr. Badger,[1] from the Hebrew *Adh* or *Ad*, the two

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[1] The *Nestorians*, &c.

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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groves and alleys, and celebrate their religious rites with great rejoicing and festivity. The women in their gayest and richest dresses, their necks and heads hung with strings of silver coins, and with either a scarlet feather or a posy of roses or anemones in their turbans, dance with the men in rings, sometimes to the number of two hundred. The young girls make the most of their holiday, dancing to their hearts' content with their admirers or affianced lovers.

The large Kûrdish tribe of the Doudjiks, which is composed of several *thâïfés*, forms another heretical sect, called Kizilbakhs. They regard Ali, the first Khalif, as the personified Deity, thus attributing to him, as do the Ali Ilahîs of Persia, a much higher position than to the Prophet of Islam. And there is yet a third description of sectarians, called Baliki, who regard Ali as the latest manifestation of the Deity in human form. The more mystical among Moslems hold that all the great Prophets who have appeared from the creation of the world—Adam, Abraham, Moses, Elias, Christ, and Mohammed—were successive incarnations of the Divine Spirit, and that the founder of Islam, because the last, was the greatest. But the Balikis ignore Mohammed entirely. According to their saying, "He (the Deity) has showed Himself in a thousand ways, and many are in doubt; if he would show Himself in one way, many would believe." Warlike and unruly as are the members of this sect, the American missionaries have been very successful among them. Such, indeed, is the influence of this handful of men from the New World that they

doors at some favored spot, such as the waterfall of Baykhal, and there is dancing accompanied by flutes and drums. It might be mentioned that on these days, as well as Jayjani Qurban, many persons, particularly the girls, stain their hands with henna, just as at a wedding. 527 [53] [302]

The second observance is concerned with the curious figure of Khidir Elyas and takes place in the autumn. "The mulla has nothing to say about Khidir Elyas, nor does he tell the people when the days come. A few people do not recognize these days." Khidir Elyas (Arabic, Khidir, "the Green One," and Elyas, Elijah) is a peculiar character of folklore, the belief in whom is singularly widespread in the Middle East. He has been discussed in some detail in a large number of works treating popular religion in the Islamic world, and appears to be a synthesis of such heroes of romance as Gilgamesh, Moses, Elijah, and Alexander the Great.[1] In Upper Egypt there are supposed to be two persons who travel together, Khidir and Elyas, and in other places only the one. His salient characteristics are his power to confer blessings and his immortality, for he is believed to have drunk from the Fountain of Life. The following narrative was recorded in Rowanduz: [183] 773 776

> Khidir Elyas is a holy man who lives forever. He walks at night and chases away evil spirits. Whoever experiences misfortune need only cry out to him for aid. One night I was bringing a load of rice to Rowanduz by mule. The mule lost his footing and fell. I shouted, "O Khidir Elyas, I have [492]

[1] For example, Tritton, 1951, p. 49.

fasted for you and you should come to my help." Out of the night a man appeared who asked me my difficulty. He helped me get the mule to his feet and reload the rice. The two of us were walking along together, talking, and suddenly I discovered I was alone. Khidir Elyas lived long ago and God gave him such power to do good that he disappeared. This is why people ask his help while he is gone. When Jesus will come again with Ahmad the Mahdi, Khidir Elyas must be with them, for otherwise they cannot come. 773 776

Persons in Rowanduz who choose to do so fast "for Khidir Elyas" for three days in the fall. Between sunrise and sunset they do not allow themselves food, drink, or tobacco. Others distribute gifts of food or clothing to the poor. Housewives make a sweet called Helaywat Khidir Elyas which is exchanged between households at this time. The exact dates of the observance could not be obtained, save that it "came just before winter." This interesting custom does not have the sanction of the mullas and the purists in the town, and is not followed by all. 785 792 [735] [262] [431] [183]

With the Sayran and Khidir Elyas observances, the "official" faith of Islam has been left behind, and the next subject of popular religion which requires consideration is the matter of the shaykh or holy man. Occasionally, this title is aristocratic and inherited in the male line, but it is most often accorded to persons who, because of their piety and the miraculous power they seem to enjoy, have acquired widespread reputations. Such as these can be powerful chieftains, noted for their justice, or the most humble of commoners. They are reputed to have the ability to effect miracles during their lifetimes, and this power continues to exist in their graves after death. Many of 792 [778]

(Arabic, "blessing"), and provides a good example of what is classified as mana in most standard works on primitive religion, an amorphous supernatural power which has a seat in certain persons or objects from which it may be transmitted. 778

The power of these holy men, unless they themselves are disturbed in some way, is wholly benevolent. The people of Rowanduz also believe in jinni (the same noun as in Arabic), spirits who, in contrast, characteristically cause great harm. There does not appear to be much thought about ghosts. No one in Rowanduz knew of a house "haunted" by the spirit of a dead man, and equated the European notion of "ghost" with that of the jinni. The jinni, for example, might take possession of a building and drive its inhabitants out. They are held to be evil spirits who constitute a separate order of creation, like the birds or the animals, and are not necessarily related to mankind. At night one must never pour hot water out of the door without first saying, "in the name of God." Although there are no cats in Rowanduz, it was said that one must never kill such an animal, because "the jinni is born in a cat and might harm one." When a boy is out walking in the wild countryside, it is believed that a voice often calls out to him, "asking him to come and meet the father," that is, the parent of the jinni who is the Fallen Angel Eblis of Islamic demonology. If the boy is foolish and leaves his path as directed, the jinni throws him from 776 [775] [782] [825]

the mountainside, causing his death. The luckless lad then meets the father of the jinni in fact, for his soul descends to the inferno. The Kurds also speak of shaytan ("satan," used in the Quran and the Arabic derivation of the Hebrew word for "adversary"), devilish beings like the jinni, but of a more congenial and ingenious character than the jinni. "When the first phonograph was heard in Rowandus," Ra'uf Effendi related, "the people said there was a shaytan in it." There are also tales of malicious men and women who are able to change themselves into animals, such as dogs. The townspeople, however, are far from demon-ridden, and, outside of a few precautions against jinni, these are largely matters of conversation, pertinent to the rare discussions of religion in the tea-shops.

In contrast, chawn sar, "the evil eye," is a subject of the greatest concern. One who has the evil eye may by his glance alone bring destruction to a person or an object. The interesting characteristic of the evil eye is that its possessor may be unaware of it and is normally without malice. If, for example, a childless woman looked on the son of a neighbor, that fleeting moment of jealousy and malevolence she experiences, which is, in a way, the evil eye itself, can cause the death of the child in question. Ra'uf Effendi's son had sickened and died, and he states flatly that this had been due to the evil eye. Further, it is believed that the individual who at one time or another has this unfortunate power cannot always

each dwelling give them a small sum and pour a little water over the dolls. Another custom is to empty a basin of water on the ground after the departure of a traveler. Browne noticed this as he was leaving Tehran:

> . . . as I mounted amidst many good wishes for my journey I heard the splash of water as it was thrown after me. What the origin of this curious ceremony may be I do not know, neither did I see it practiced on any other occasion.[1]

In Rowandux, Tuesday is considered to be an unlucky day for any outstanding enterprise, such as a major business transaction or a wedding. As among many primitive groups, the parings of fingernails and hair from a comb are not to be thrown away. There is no belief that they might be used in black magic, but it is considered "best" to wrap them in a bit of paper or a rag and place the packet in a crevice. A tooth is also put in a hole of some sort in the wall of the house, "in order that no one will get a headache." Dreams are, to some extent, considered to have prophetic significance. "An angel may come in a dream," it was said, "and point out the location of buried treasure." Some of the other superstitions, for example, the significance attached to bread, have been noticed in previous sections.

In concluding this section, it is difficult, if not impossible, to assay the piety of the inhabitants of Rowandux as a whole. There are many of the townspeople who do not say five prayers daily or fast during Ramadan, and a large number of the chieftains seem to take their faith

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[1]Browne, 1893, p. 174.

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

Of the two women who had accompanied the bride, the aunt was to stay in the new home with her for a week; the other woman was to keep guard outside the bridal chamber and return to Sulaimani, whence the bride was come, the following morning taking with her the bridal sheet with the proof of the bride's virginity[146]. It was said that if the bride proved not to be a virgin, she would be killed by one of her own male relatives.

A festive meal similar to that served to the men was partaken of by the women. This was carried in on large, common eating trays. The women ate first and then the children. When the meal was over the women guests departed.

The women's rôle in the village milieu thus comprises the reception and welcome of the bride, and the witnessing of certain ceremonies when the bridegroom first meets his bride. These ceremonies include the release of a fowl over the bride and a blow on the head delivered by the groom. The women's rôle then includes a common meal that ends the festivities. The bride's mother-in-law bids her welcome, though the bride's mother does not accompany her daughter when she leaves the home and has no part in the reception of the bride and her handing over to the bridegroom. In her place is a female relative and the woman who is to bring back evidence of the bride's virginity.

In regard to the fowl released over the bride's head, it was said that earlier the bird was killed, but now they just let is loose. In this connexion it may be of interest that Granqvist reports about the Arabs in Palestine that at some places an animal is sacrificed[147] when the bridal couple enters the bridegroom's house.

Granqvist also mentions that according to Arab custom, entry into a house is always an important matter, as all kinds of spirits, demons, *jinns* and so forth attempt to slip in, too, and naturally a bride's first entry into her new home is a specially delicate affair[148]. In regard to Islamised Turks in Chinese and Russian Turkestan, Krohn calls attention to the remains of Shamanism and ancestral worship, and refers to the precautionary measures connected with the entrance of the bride into the husband's family. Quoting Grenard, Krohn writes: "Es handelt sich sich danach nur um Massnahmen, die Frau aus ihrem Sippenkultverband auszulösen und in einen neuen, den der Sippe des Mannes, aufzunehmen"[149]. In my opinion this ceremony falls under "Rites de passage"[150]; the blow I witnessed is given with enormous gravity and thoroughness by the bridegroom to the still unknown young woman, whilst his male relatives afford him symbolical support by ranging themselves alongside him and in helping him to smoothe the heavy stick.

The bride knew what was awaiting her when, supported by her two companions she approached the entrance door to the house. Everybody appeared to be taking part in an act of the utmost seriousness, an act that to the regret of bride and bridegroom might result in a fractured skull but which they had no possibility of avoiding, an act not performed before the male group but the assembled women's group. Krohn's analysis can probably be accepted: that it is here a matter of a ceremony, the purpose of which is to release the bride from her own family and to accept her in the man's, as she crosses the threshold of her future home and before the first sexual intercourse takes place. Granqvist refers to the fact that in Palestine the bridegroom gives his bride three blows on the hand which she places on the door before entering her future home. In notes, Granqvist quotes a number of statements by other writers in support of the contention that the blows are a symbolic act that are to ensure

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

CHAPTER V

WOMAN'S PLACE IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ISLAM

As we know, the five pillars of Islam are: The confession of faith, the five daily eulogies of Allah, generally known as the five daily "prayers", the duty to give alms, the fast in the 9th month, and the pilgrimage to Mecca undertaken in the 12th month of the Muslim lunar year[1].

Whereas the confession of faith is not dealt with in the law books of Islam, the other four pillars, coupled with the necessary ritual purity when reciting the daily prayers, form the five religious acts or pious exercises that comprise the actual cult of Islam.

What place has this cult in the life of the Kurdish woman?

With the nymphs of Paradise, houris, awaiting the faithful in Paradise—an idea that only appears at the beginning of Mohammed's revelations[2] and is later dropped[3]—the Islamic woman, in our Western conception, is to some extent excluded from the religious life of Islam. The same impression is gained by a visit to a mosque. Whereas in our Western culture, most of the congregation that assembles in church on Sunday—the only day devoted by us to religion—are women, few women are seen in Islam's ever-open, carpeted, silent house of prayer, the mosque. When women go there it is only within a definite area barred by a low railing at the far end of the building.

If without access to a Muslim home, one therefore gains the impression that in Islam a life of piety is a matter for the men, yet it is only at the Friday midday prayer that men congregate in the mosque to any great extent. The men who visit the mosque daily and at several of the five daily prayer times, are those who in their homes or at their places of work have insufficient room and quiet to pray and to perform the prior, ordained ritual washing. Most other men say their prayers in their homes, their barrths, or at their place of business[4]. Kurdish women were found to possess a warm and living interest in their religion, but their piety is exercised within the home.

Among the women of the village aristocracy in Topzawa, the five daily prayer periods were observed with the utmost devotion.

The midday prayer that begins the day was observed individually—like the others, in concert—by the two adult women in the house and the 17 year old daughter shortly after noon and for up to one hour later. The prayer rug, *kbrmal*, (E. 2254) of goat's wool, rectangular in form, 1.60 × 1.16 m. in size, woven in grey and brown natural-coloured yarn, wedge patterned, was placed on the floor in the three-walled room, the axis of which was orientated towards Mekka. The women tied the s

[P. 145]